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RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 0114
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 0587
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL 0403
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 0111
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 0270
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RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 0511
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 2409
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 1794
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BISHKEK 000284

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KG](#)

SUBJECT: KYRGYZ ANALYSTS PREDICT POLITICAL STANDOFF TO BE
RESOLVED BEFORE PLANNED DEMONSTRATIONS

REF: A. BISHKEK 270

[1](#)B. BISHKEK 228

[1](#)C. BISHKEK 63

BISHKEK 00000284 001.4 OF 002

Classified By: Amb. Marie L. Yovanovitch, Reason 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: During a March 19 meeting with the Ambassador, two leading Kyrgyz political analysts predicted that the current standoff between the government and Felix Kulov's United Front would be resolved ahead of street protests planned for April 11. Former Foreign Minister Murat Imanaliyev suggested that President Bakiyev was taking a conciliatory approach by offering to meet with opposition leaders, discuss further constitutional reforms, and even bring a group from the opposition into government. Analyst Valentin Bogatyrev suggested that Bakiyev was sending signals directly to Felix Kulov, possibly about a deal that would bring him back into government. Both analysts suggested that First Deputy Prime Minister Daniyar Usenov was on the "edge of a fall," and they said that several other cabinet changes were imminent. Imanaliyev and Bogatyrev are usually -- but not always -- right in their forecasts, but they did admit that they were describing a "best case" scenario, especially with respect to Kulov. END SUMMARY.

Bakiyev Ready to Talk and Compromise?

[1](#)2. (C) Ambassador met March 19 with former Foreign Minister and current Institute for Public Policy president Murat Imanaliyev and former director of the International Institute for Strategic Research Valentin Bogatyrev. Both Imanaliyev

and Bogatyrev have been strongly critical of the Bakiyev government in the past (see Ref C), and in this meeting they continued to criticize the government, condemning the rising influence criminal elements and increased corruption in the government. In contrast to others who have raised concerns about the possibility of violence if opposition protests begin as planned on April 11 (see Ref A), Imanaliyev and Bagatyrev predicted that the standoff between the government and Felix Kulov's United Front would be resolved ahead of any demonstrations.

13. (C) Imanaliyev said that President Bakiyev had decided to take a conciliatory approach by offering to meet with opposition members to discuss "all questions" of reforms, including constitutional reform. (Note: Bakiyev met March 19 with opposition MP Temir Sariyev, and a group from For Reforms, including co-chair Almaz Atambayev, has reportedly agreed to meet with the president March 21. End Note.) Imanaliyev suggested that Bakiyev was willing to consider a new draft of the constitution, either to be put to parliament or to a referendum in June. This would be followed by early parliamentary elections in the fall, with the new parliament possibly elected entirely by party list.

Reaching out to Kulov?

14. (C) Both analysts claimed that Bakiyev was trying to reach out to Kulov. Bogatyrev said that Bakiyev had sent signals to Kulov that he was ready to work out differences, but Imanaliyev said that the challenge was to find a basis for talks that would save face after the harsh words between them (see Ref B). Bogatyrev sketched out a scenario of Bakiyev backing Kulov as Speaker of Parliament, following early elections in the fall. This would require a great deal of money and coordination, and Bogatyrev acknowledged it as a

BISHKEK 00000284 002.4 OF 002

"maximum" or "best case" scenario.

Usenov on the Edge?

15. (C) The analysts agreed that powerful First Deputy Prime Minister Daniyar Usenov was on the "edge of a fall," and would probably be sacrificed to facilitate a rapprochement between Kulov and Bakiyev. Recent scandals surrounding the attempted backdoor privatizations of the Aurora Sanitorium and the Kristall silicon factory, as well as Usenov's role in the renegotiation of the agreement for operation of the Kumtor gold mine all pointed to Usenov's increasingly bold corruption. "He's just stealing, and sending his money to the UAE," said Bogatyrev. The opposition is delighted with Usenov's role; their view is that "the more (Usenov) does, the sooner Bakiyev won't be president." (Note: Parliament has scheduled a no-confidence vote on Usenov for March 20. The vote itself would be symbolic, but it could give the president an excuse to get rid of Usenov. End Note.)

Other Changes Coming?

16. (C) Bogatyrev predicted that Bakiyev would soon make several changes in the government. He said that Prosecutor General Kamabaraly Kongantiyev would move to the National Security Council (Note: Kongantiyev was dismissed as Prosecutor General late on March 19, but there was no announcement of a new position for him. End Note.), and Presidential Chief of Staff Myktybek Abdyldayev would move to the Prosecutor's post (Note: Abdyldayev was chief prosecutor during the Akayev regime. End Note.). He said that new Prime Minister Isabekov seemed unable to make a decision on his own, going to Bakiyev on "everything," leaving Bakiyev unable to plan for the future.

Comment

17. (C) Imanaliyev and Bogatyrev are astute observers of the political scene here; they are usually -- but not always -- right in their predictions. They are correct that Bakiyev is reaching out to the opposition, offering to meet individually with opposition members -- though to this point just with opposition members who have not joined the United Front. This may be a strategy of divide and conquer, or it may be that Bakiyev feels the pressure and sees a political need to compromise. Deputy Defense Minister Oruzbayev, an ally and childhood friend of Kulov, told the DCM recently that Bakiyev is "weak" and has no option but to reach out. In January, Imanaliyev and Bogatyrev (and other analysts) were ready to write off Kulov as a spent political force, outmaneuvered and not trusted by others in opposition (Ref C). Now, they are seeing a comeback for Kulov. While it is hard to imagine a reconciliation between Kulov and Bakiyev, there will no doubt be many behind the scenes conversations between the major political players in the run-up to the planned demonstrations, and a compromise is possible.

YOVANOVITCH